NOTICE OF AVAILABILITY OF FEDERAL ASSISTANCE
CALL FOR PROPOSALS

U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
2003 Tongass Monitoring Program
Deadline: February 28, 2003

Summary

The Juneau Field Office of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service is soliciting proposals of 1 to 3 years in duration for scientific studies and projects related to the Service's Tongass Monitoring Program. This program supports activities that evaluate ecosystem condition and the impacts of natural resource development on terrestrial and freshwater ecosystems in Southeast Alaska. In 2003, the program will focus on evaluating the effectiveness of silvicultural prescriptions designed to maintain or improve wildlife habitat values. This document details the requirements for applications seeking support for projects that address this or other Tongass Monitoring Program goals during the 2003 funding cycle.

Background

The Tongass National Forest is by far the largest National Forest in the United States, comprising over 17 million acres that include most of Alaska's southeastern panhandle. The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service was a key participant in the development of the 1997 Revised Tongass Land and Resource Management Plan (TLMP), which includes an aggressive conservation strategy designed to ensure healthy populations of all native species and preclude the need for Endangered Species Act listings in southeastern Alaska.

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service receives an annual appropriation to participate in TLMP implementation, with an emphasis on ecological monitoring. The Service, along with the Alaska Department of Fish and Game (ADF&G), uses this annual allocation to assist U.S. Forest Service (USFS) with evaluating and modifying conservation strategies, as needed, to ensure the continued viability of native fish and wildlife populations and their habitats. A portion of the annual allocation is made available to cooperators to assist in achieving these objectives.

USFS has recently installed treatments in the Tongass for two region-wide experiments in the use of silvicultural prescriptions to enhance wildlife habitat values in harvested areas. The first experiment explores the use of harvest methods other than clearcutting; it is known as the Alternatives to Clearcutting Study. The second experiment explores the use of silvicultural treatments (*e.g.* thinning) in young second-growth stands; it is known as the Young Growth Study. Both experimental designs are broadly replicated across the Tongass, and all replicates include both randomized treatments and controls. These experiments provide an unusual opportunity for rigorous scientific examination of the effectiveness of forest management strategies in an established, adaptive management framework.

Goals

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service's mission is, working with others, to conserve, protect, and enhance fish, wildlife, and plants and their habitats for the continuing benefit of the American people. The mission of the Service's Tongass Monitoring Program is to evaluate whether the continued viability of the Southeast Alaskan biota is adequately protected by TLMP from impacts due to forest management activities. The Tongass Monitoring Program collects information on the biological impacts of specific forest management practices, as well as on the status of species and populations that may be impacted by those practices. The primary goal of this information gathering is early detection of threats to species and population viability, and the development of sufficient understanding of the nature of those threats to recommend changes to forest management policies that will alleviate them.

Specifics

For 2003, we are soliciting proposals that address the following topical areas:

1. Effectiveness of specific forest management techniques for maintaining or enhancing habitat for wildlife and fish
2. Evaluation of the TLMP conservation strategy
3. Status of poorly known species and/or populations from Southeast Alaska

Details for each of the topical areas follow, along with some specific projects we are seeking proposals for. Proposals other than those described below will be accepted as long as they support the mission and goals of the Service's Tongass Monitoring Program.

> *Effectiveness of forest management techniques:* We are seeking proposals that will examine the relative effectiveness of alternative harvest and second-growth treatment strategies for preserving wildlife habitat values. We are especially interested in: (1) response to treatments by species with limited use areas, especially small mammals; and (2) response to treatments by key vegetational habitat features such as understory structure and forage species abundance. To study these responses, we encourage the use of existing treatments in the USFS PNW Research Station "Alternatives to Clearcutting" study, and the Tongass National Forest "Young Growth Study". Details of the Alternatives to Clearcutting treatment design are found in the establishment report, which can be downloaded here:
>
> http://www.fs.fed.us/pnw/pubs/gtr494.pdf

More information about the Alternatives to Clearcutting design and ongoing research at those sites can be obtained from:

Mike McClellan
Resource Management and Productivity Team Leader
USFS Forestry Sciences Laboratory
(907) 586-8811 x246
mmcclellan@fs.fed.us

For the Young Growth Study, the establishment report has not yet been prepared. Briefly, during 2002 USFS designed seven prescriptions intended to improve habitat quality in second growth stands of various ages. These prescriptions included variable-spaced thinning, pruning, and alder planting at a variety of intensities and combinations, as appropriate to the age and setting of the stand. Sixty replicate stands were divided into thirds, each at least 10 acres, and each third was randomly assigned as either a control or to one of two second growth treatments. No pretreatment data were gathered due to the short time available for implementing the treatments, but the design was randomized, replicated, and all stands included controls. All stands were treated in 2002 except for the alder planting, which will occur in spring 2003. For more information on the Young Growth Study, contact:

Gene DeGayner
USFS Alaska Region Wildlife Ecologist
(907) 772-5858
edegayner@fs.fed.us

or

Jim Russell
Tongass NF Lead Silviculturist
(907) 747-4284
jmrussell@fs.fed.us

Evaluation of the TLMP conservation strategy: The TLMP conservation strategy is comprised of several elements: (1) a set of old-growth reserves and non-development areas; (2) a network of riparian and beach buffer strips that may provide connectivity between the reserves; and (3) a set of Standards and Guidelines that govern management activities in the intervening matrix. The objective of the TLMP conservation strategy is to maintain viable populations of existing native and desired non-native biota, well-distributed throughout the planning area. We are seeking proposals that evaluate either the effectiveness of individual components in meeting the goal of the conservation strategy, or evaluations of the conservation strategy as a whole. Specific areas of interest include:

- Will the conservation strategy prevent previously connected populations from becoming isolated due to habitat fragmentation? Northern flying squirrels are a particular concern, due to their apparent smaller dispersal distances and requirement for contiguous forest to move through.
- What management activities within a reserve might compromise the effectiveness of the reserve in meeting the goal of the conservation strategy? Particular activities that may be causes of concern include: roading; pre-existing management impacts; and second growth treatments. Also, what are the appropriate criteria for setting reserve boundaries? For instance, is a given-sized reserve more effective when it follows natural landscape boundaries or when it maximizes inclusion of high-value habitat?
- What species or life stages are likely to suffer impacts from what specific management activities, and to what degree? What are the appropriate spatial restrictions (buffers) or timing restrictions on activities near known critical foraging or nesting sites to avoid impacting survival or reproductive rates of these species?
- Are there species of flora or fauna that are not adequately protected from future management impacts by the TLMP conservation strategy, especially those that were not considered during the reserve design process?
- Are there species or populations that are suffering from impacts of past management activities unmitigated by the provisions of TLMP? What mitigation or restoration actions would remedy the situation?

Species poorly known from Southeast Alaska: In this topical area, we are seeking proposals to fill the many gaps in our knowledge of species distributions in the Tongass National Forest. We are particularly interested in taxonomic groups that have received little attention to date, including forest birds and amphibians. Also, we are especially interested in population structure and the distribution and relative abundance of endemic or rare species and small, isolated populations. Interest is greatest for populations and species whose viability has been, or might soon be, impacted by Tongass management activities.

Funding and Reporting

For 2003, approximately $150,000 is expected to be available for distribution under this Call for Proposals. In 2002, annual awards for new proposals ranged from $15,500 to $45,000 and averaged $29,000. For proposals newly funded in 2003, we expect that annual awards will not exceed $50,000.

Funding is awarded on a year-to-year basis. Multiyear awards may be funded in total or incrementally on an annual basis, pending future availability of funds and receipt of acceptable progress reports. For multiple-year projects, an annual progress report and justification for continuing funds must be submitted at the close of each calendar year. At no time is an awardee authorized to incur reimbursable costs in excess of the funded

amount in the award document. A final report is due approximately six months following termination of all projects. A call for progress and final reports will be sent to awardees in the fall.

For scientific studies, a peer-reviewed study plan is required before fieldwork begins. The Service has an established process for peer review of Tongass Monitoring study plans. A study plan is submitted to the Service, reviewers' comments are returned to the study plan authors, and the authors are then asked to incorporate or respond in writing to the comments. The intent is to complete this process prior to the first full field season.

Eligibility

Federal agencies may compete for funding that, if awarded, would be transferred through inter-agency agreements.

Non-federal governmental agencies, non-profit organizations, and educational institutions may compete for funds that, if awarded, will be transferred through a federal assistance award, such as a grant agreement.

Review Process

Proposals will be reviewed internally by Service staff and also by an interagency committee that includes representatives from ADF&G and USFS. Final funding decisions will be made by the Field Supervisor of the Southeast Alaska Fish and Wildlife Service Office. Criteria used to rank proposals will include:

- *Merit:* Intrinsic value of the project and the likelihood that it will lead to new knowledge.
- *Relevance:* Consistency of the project with the goals of the Service's Tongass Monitoring Program, and especially its usefulness for TLMP evaluation.
- *Technical Approach:* Presentation of focused objectives along with a complete but efficient strategy for achieving those objectives.
- *Opportunity:* Likelihood of successful project completion as evidenced by past performance and cooperative work, especially in Southeast Alaska, as well as timely communications and sharing of findings, data, and other products.
- *Linkages:* Connections to existing or planned studies.
- *Costs:* Appropriateness of the requested amount of funds, adequacy of the proposed resources to accomplish the project, and availability of matching funds or in-kind contributions.

Dependent on the comments of reviewers, applicants may be asked to modify objectives, work plans, or budgets and provide supplemental information prior to the award.

Proposal Submission

One printed and one electronic copy of the proposal are required. Electronic submissions will be accepted via email, but an identical printed version must also be submitted to our office within a reasonable interval. Submit proposals in the format given below to:

Tongass Monitoring Coordinator
U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
3000 Vintage Blvd. Suite 201
Juneau, Alaska 99801

Email: Kim_Hastings@fws.gov

All proposals for work to be done in spring or summer 2003 must be received by 5:00 p.m. on February 28, 2003. Announcement of awards for this funding cycle will be in April 2003. USFWS will begin the process of distributing funds to awardees not later than May 1, for use immediately upon completion of the appropriate grant, agreement, or contract. The performance period is negotiable with the awardee and will be specified in the grant, agreement, or contract.

Proposals received after the February 2003 deadline may be considered for remaining 2003 funds at a later date, or may be resubmitted for 2004.

Format for Proposals

Each proposal must include a cover sheet, proposal body of no more than 3 pages, and a single budget page. Please follow the guidelines given in this section.

Cover Sheet

The cover sheet should include the following items:

- *Project title:*
- *Date submitted:*
- *Contacts:* List primary contact first. For each person listed, include job title, organizational affiliation, mailing address, fax and telephone number, and e-mail. Be sure that all persons listed have reviewed the proposal and will play a significant role in the project.
- *Budget request:* [for 2003 fiscal year only]
- *Expected duration of project:* [e.g., 1 year, 2 years, 3 years]
- *Tax I.D. #*

Proposal Body

- *Objective(s)*: Present a clear, concise, complete, and logically arranged statement of the specific research or programmatic objective(s) proposed. Number your objectives and limit them to one sentence each.
- *Justification:* Describe the importance of this proposed project to the continued viability of native species of plants and animals found in Southeast Alaska. What aspects of the management of natural resources in Southeast Alaska will this project address? How does the project support USFWS Tongass Monitoring goals?
- *Previous work:* What previous work has been done in this area by yourself and others? If appropriate, include a brief literature review. Proposals will be reviewed by a multidisciplinary group; provide enough background that a person outside of your discipline will understand the need for the research, methods, and/or procedures. What preliminary data or other evidence suggests that the proposed project will accomplish the stated objectives within the proposed time frame?
- *Procedure(s):* For each objective, discuss the procedures you propose to employ and why they were chosen. Where appropriate, include sampling plan, experimental design, proposed type(s) of data analysis, and form, frequency, and parameters of data collection. Specify the sample unit and the number of replications and any other information that will help reviewers assess the scientific merit of this proposal.
- *Outcome(s):* Describe the product(s) of your proposal and when they will be available for use by resource managers. Do you have specific plans for involving resource managers in the research phase? What impacts on practical resource management will the anticipated results of your proposal have? How will researchers be involved in moving these results into use?
- *Roles:* If the proposal is a joint submission by more than one person or organization, describe the roles of each entity involved in the project. Is the proposal concurrent with other complementary research programs or projects? If so, what is their current status?
- *Project timetable:* Present a timetable for each project objective detailing when various phases will be initiated, fieldwork and analysis conducted, and completed. Timetable must include all years of project, not just 2003-2004.

Budget Page

Itemize the following budget items for each year of the proposed project. Although funding may only be granted on a yearly basis, include your needs for all years of the proposed project (usually a maximum of three years).

- *Personnel:* Specify the number of personnel. For each position, specify professional level and the length of time that will be dedicated to the project annually.

- *Benefits*
- *Supplies and Expenses:* Identify the nature of supplies and expenses for which funding is requested.
- *Permanent Equipment:* List specific items, their cost, and a brief justification for each item. USFWS may choose to purchase major equipment items and loan them to you for the duration of your research; however, please include price of purchase in your budget.
- *Travel: E*stimate number of trips and cost of each, and indicate purpose.
- *Indirect Costs and Overhead:* Identify both the actual amount and the percentage used to calculate that amount.
- *Total*

Also identify any other monetary support (requested or received) for this project. Specify any in-kind contributions, including that of your own organization. How will the total support package tie together? If no other support is expected, state this.

For Further Information

Copies of this Call for Proposals may be downloaded from the Internet at:

http://alaska.fws.gov/EcologicalServices/tmcfp2003.pdf

If you need more information, please send email to: Kim_Hastings@fws.gov